

Message Text

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72

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 DRC-01 /097 W

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R 011829Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7051

INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS/ PINS, UY, PE

SUBJ: URUGUAYAN PRESS HITS EXPROPRIATION OF PERUVIAN PRESS

1. ALL MONTEVIDEO DAILIES HAVE GIVEN HEAVY PLAY TO PERU'S EXPROPRIATION OF MAJOR NEWSPAPERS. IN ADDITION TO WIRE SERVICE STORIES AND OTHER COMMENT FROM ABROAD, PERU'S DECISION HAS BEEN CONDEMNED IN EDITORIALS AND COLUMNS. IN ADDITION, THE BLANCO PARTY ORGAN, EL PAIS REPRINTED WHAT IT HEADLINED AS "THE LAST FREE EDITORIAL OF A PERUVIAN DAILY" (FROM EL COMERCIO)

2. AS EXPECTED, THE LOCAL PRESS WAS UNIFORMLY CRITICAL. A CONSERVATIVE LA MANANA EDITORIAL TERMED THE PERUVIAN MOVE "AN INEXCUSABLE DECISION, A FLAGRANT AFFRONT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND TO FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, IN THE FACE OF WHICH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO REMAIN SILENT OR COMPLACENT."

3. THE BATTLISTA EL DIA TOOK ISSUE NOT ONLY WITH THE DECISION BUT ALSO WITH THE LOGIC BEHIND IT, ARGUING THAT LARGE CIRCULATIONS ARE NOT DUE TO CAPITALISTIC MANIPULATION BUT RATHER TO THE ABILITY OF A PAPER TO ATTRACT, CONVINCE
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AND INTEREST THE MASSES OF PEOPLE. AN AUGUST 1 EL DIA

EDITORIAL EXTENDED THIS THEME, STATING, "TO SAY IN THESE DAYS THAT THE PRESS AS A BUSINESS ENTERPRISE IMPEDES THAT WHICH SERVES THE GENERAL INTEREST IS TO INSULT GRATUITIOUSLY THE BEST TRADITION AND THE MOST ARDUOUS STRUGGLES; AND IT IS TO IGNORE THAT WHICH, IN THESE VERY DAYS, IS BEING DEMONSTRATED BEFORE THE ADMIRING EYES OF THE WHOLE WORLD: THAT A FREE AND STRONG PRESS IS CAPABLE OF SHAKING NO LESS THAN THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES THROUGH PARLIAMEN-TARY REPERCUSSION FROM THECHARGES FORMULATED IN ITS COLUMNS."

4. EL PAIS PUBLISHED A THOUGHTFUL COMMENT ON JULY 31 IN THE GUISE OF A LETTER. IT SAID, INTER ALIA, "...THE GOVERNMENT OF PERU SHUT OFF THELAST REDOUBTSOF FREE THOUGHT...WITH IT THE GOVERNMENT OF THAT BROTHERCOUNTRY DID NOTHING ORIGINAL, ON THE CONTRARY, IT TRAVELS THE SAME INEXORABLE ROAD OF ALL REGIMES OF FORCE, DRESSED IN BROWN SHIRTS OR RED, OR SIMPLY WITH TINGES OF ONE OR THE OTHER, SOON CLOSING LFE SCRIPTS OF FREE EXPRESSION TOLEAVE OPEN ONLY THOSE WHICH CARRY SWEET PRAISE, AND BEHIND THAT THE MUDDY WATER OF LIES, MIS- INFORMATION AND DECEPTION OF THE MULTITUDES."

5. THERE HAVE BEEN SEOM INTERESTING LOCAL SIDELIGHTS TO THE PERUVIAN MATTER. FIRST, A PAID STATEMENT OF THE PERUVIAN EMBASSY APPEARED ONLY IN A LEFTIST WEEKLY, APPARENTLY HAVING BEEN REJECTED BY THE OTHER PAPERS. SECOND, EL DIA RAN TWO EDITORIALS ON FREEDOM AND HUMAN RIGHTS, ONE OF WHICH DID NOT MENTION PERU AND ONE WHICH DID SO ONLY marginally. THE LOCAL PLAY OF THE PERUVIAN SITUATION IS NOT ONLY A WAIL OF GRIEF FOR THREATENED COLLEAGUES BUT ALSO ONLY A SLIGHTLY VIELED PLEA FOR GREATER FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN URUGUAY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, CENSORSHIP, NATIONALIZATION, NEWSPAPERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 AUG 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974MONTEV02149
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740211-0782
From: MONTEVIDEO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740882/aaaacsua.tel
Line Count: 94
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 SEP 2002 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <20 FEB 2003 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: URUGUAYAN PRESS HITS EXPROPRIATION OF PERUVIAN PRESS
TAGS: PINS, UY, PE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005